

IN THE CLAIMS:

All claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown in the listing of claims and will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. No new matter has been added. Please enter these claims as amended.

Listing of the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for obtaining information about the capacity or tendency of an oligopeptide of at most ~~30 amino acids~~ 9 amino acids long to regulate expression of a gene comprising the steps of:

- a) contacting said oligopeptide with at least one cell; and
- b) determining the presence of a NF-kappaB/Rel protein in or derived from said at least one cell.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein said oligopeptide comprises an amino acid sequence corresponding to a fragment of a naturally occurring polypeptide.

3. (original) The method according to claim 2 wherein said naturally occurring polypeptide comprises human chorionic gonadotropic hormone (hCG).

4. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein said cell comprises an eukaryotic cell.

5. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1 further comprising

- c) determining the presence of said NF-kappaB/Rel protein in or derived from a cell which has not been contacted with said oligopeptide, ~~or peptide derivative thereof~~, and determining the ratio of said NF-kappaB/Rel protein found in step b) to gene product found in step c).

6. (Withdrawn) A method for identifying or obtaining a signalling molecule comprising a peptide or functional derivative or analogue thereof capable of modulating expression of a gene in a cell comprising providing said cell with a peptide or derivative or analogue thereof and determining the activity and/or nuclear translocation of a gene transcription factor and then synthesising the molecule with the desired activity.

7. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 6 further comprising determining whether said signalling molecule is membrane-permeable.

8. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 6 wherein said gene transcription factor comprises a NF-kappaB/Rel protein.

9. (Withdrawn) A method for identifying or obtaining a signalling molecule comprising a peptide or functional derivative or analogue thereof capable of modulating expression of a gene in a cell comprising providing said cell with a peptide or derivative or analogue thereof and determining relative up-regulation and/or down-regulation of at least one gene expressed in said cell and then synthesising the molecule with the desired activity.

10. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 9 further comprising determining relative up-regulation and/or down-regulation of at least one gene expressed in said cell.

11. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 6 further comprising determining relative up-regulation and/or down-regulation of a multitude of genes expressed in said cell.

12. (Withdrawn) A method for identifying or obtaining a signalling molecule comprising a peptide or functional derivative or analogue thereof capable of modulating expression of a gene in a cell comprising providing a peptide or derivative or analogue thereof and determining binding of said peptide or derivative or analogue thereof to a factor related to gene control and then synthesising the molecule with the desired activity.

13. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 12 further comprising providing a multitude of peptides or derivatives or analogues thereof and determining binding of at least one of said peptides or derivatives or analogues thereof to a factor related to gene control.

14. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 12 wherein said factor related to gene control comprises a transcription factor.

15. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 14 wherein said transcription factor comprises a NF-kappaB-Rel protein.

16. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 12 further comprising providing a cell with said peptide or derivative or analogue thereof and determining the activity and/or nuclear translocation of a gene transcription factor in said cell.

17. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 12 further comprising providing a cell with said peptide or derivative or analogue thereof and determining relative up-regulation and/or down-regulation of at least one gene expressed in said cell.

18. (Withdrawn) A signalling molecule useful in modulating expression of a gene in a cell and identifiable or obtainable by employing a method according to claim 1.

19. (Withdrawn) A signalling molecule according to claim 18 selected from the group of peptides LQG, AQG, LQGV, AQGV, LQGA, VLPALP, ALPALP, VAPALP, ALPALPQ, VLPAAPQ, VLPALAQ, LAGV, VLAALP, VLAALP, VLPALA, VLPALPQ, VLAALPQ, VLPALPA, GVLPALP, LQGVLPALPQVVC, LPGCPRGVNPVVS, LPGC, MTRV, MTR, VVC, and functional analogues or derivatives thereof.

20. (Withdrawn) A signalling molecule capable of modulating expression of a gene in a cell comprising a peptide of at most 30 amino acids or a functional analogue or derivative thereof.

21. (Withdrawn) A signalling molecule according to claim 20 wherein said peptide is an oligopeptide of from about 3 to at about 15 amino acids long.

22. (Withdrawn) A modulator of NF-kappaB/Rel protein activation comprising a signalling molecule according to claim 18.

23-24. (Cancelled).